

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously presented): An opening-force-maximizing device of an underpressure-activated valve structured for connection to a drinking container having an outlet opening, said device comprising:

a partition wall provided with a wall opening and structured to be able to cover and pressure-sealingly enclose the outlet opening in the drinking container;

a peripherally continuous membrane positioned at an outside of the partition wall and subjected to ambient pressure, the membrane being arranged about a valve axis through the wall opening in the partition wall, the valve axis defining the axial direction of the underpressure-activated valve; and

an axially movable valve sealing member connected to the membrane and provided with a valve head positioned upstream of the wall opening for the opening and closing thereof;

- wherein an upstream side of the partition wall is provided with a valve seat formed around the wall opening for pressure-sealing and valve-closing contact with said valve head when the membrane is in an inactive position;
- wherein the membrane has an axial extent so as to form a sleeve-like body having two axial termination ends represented by an attachment end and a maneuvering end;
- wherein the attachment end is fixedly connected to the partition wall at a peripheral rim thereof;
- wherein the movable maneuvering end is positioned at an axial distance from the attachment end and is connected in a tensile-force-transmitting manner to the valve sealing member;
- wherein one side of the membrane is structured for receiving an underpressure which, together with said ambient pressure, creates a differential pressure across the membrane;
- wherein the sleeve-like membrane, when in its inactive position, is arranged with a maximum axial extent;
- wherein the membrane is radially flexible and therefore able to deflect in a radial direction relative to said valve axis; and
- wherein the membrane is arranged in a manner inhibiting axial stretching causing it to be insignificantly extendable in said axial direction when subjected to said differential pressure,

which generates a tensile force in the membrane causing the membrane to contract axially and assume an active position, thereby causing a valve-opening, axial movement of the valve sealing member.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The device according to claim 1, wherein the maneuvering end is connected to a separate valve sealing member.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The device according to claim 1, wherein the valve sealing member forms an extension of the maneuvering end.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The device according to claim 1, wherein the membrane is of a cylindrical shape.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The device according to claim 1, wherein the membrane is of a conical shape.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The device according to claim 1, wherein the membrane is provided with a cylindrical membrane portion proximate its attachment end and a conical membrane portion proximate its maneuvering end.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The device according to claim 1, wherein the membrane is radially deflectable outwards from the valve axis.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The device according to claim 7, wherein a mid portion of the membrane is shaped as an axially extending bellows having axially extending folds.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The device according to claim 1, wherein the membrane is radially deflectable inwards towards the valve axis.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The device according to claim 9, wherein the membrane is provided with at least one peripheral bracing ring disposed between the attachment end and the

maneuvering end of the membrane, whereby the membrane, upon activation, assumes a deflection profile determined by the at least one bracing ring.

Claim 11 (previously presented): The device according to claim 9, wherein the membrane is arranged with buckle locators in the form of axially extending corrugations or folds capable of yielding a certain resistance to radial deflection of the membrane, whereby the membrane, upon activation, assumes a deflection profile determined by the axial corrugations or folds.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The device according to claim 1, wherein the membrane is braced axially for it to yield a certain resistance to radial deflection, whereby the membrane, when inactive, exerts a firm closing force on the valve sealing member.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The device according to claim 12, wherein the membrane is provided with one or more axial braces.

Claim 14 (previously presented): The device according to claim 12, wherein the membrane, when viewed in cross-section, is arranged into a hexagonal shape, star shape or wave shape, which has an axially bracing effect.

Claim 15 (previously presented): The device according to claim 1, wherein the membrane is formed asymmetrically about the valve axis.

Claim 16 (cancelled)

Claim 17 (previously presented): The device according to claim 1, wherein the valve sealing member and an edge of the wall opening are connected via a breakable seal capable of being broken upon first-time movement of the sealing member.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The device according to claim 10, wherein the membrane is arranged with buckle locators in the form of axially extending corrugations or folds capable of yielding a certain resistance to radical deflection of the membrane, whereby the membrane, upon activation, assumes a deflection profile determined by the axial corrugations or folds.

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Claim 19 (previously presented): The device according to claim 7, wherein the membrane is braced axially for it to yield a certain resistance to radial deflection, whereby the membrane, when inactive, exerts a firm closing force on the valve sealing member.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The device according to claim 9, wherein the membrane is braced axially for it to yield a certain resistance to radial deflection, whereby the membrane, when inactive, exerts a firm closing force on the valve sealing member.